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SUBJECT: RUMORS OF CIVILIAN UNREST AND COUP PLOTTING DIMINISHED

SUMMARY. LATE JANUARY AND EARLY FEBRUARY RUMORS OF COUP PLOTTING AND POSSIBLE CIVILIAN UNREST HAVE DIMINISHED IN RECENT WEEKS FOLLOWING SCHEDULED MINISTERIAL CHANGES, DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING THE POLICE, AND DECISIONS IN LABOR ARA. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING LATE JANUARY AND EARLY FEBRUARY LIMA WAS ALIVE WITH RUMORS OF POSSIBLE CIVIL STRIFE AND COUP PLOTTING. RUMORS WERE PRIMARILY DUE TO ANTICIPATED FEBRUARY 1 MINISTERIAL CHANGES, THE APPROACHING ANNIVERSARY OF FEBRUARY 5, 1975 RIOTS, THE DEEEPENING ECONOMIC CRISIS WITH LABOR OPPOSITION TO GOP AUSTERITY MEASURES, AND THE STILL UNDEFINED POLITICAL DEIRECTION OF THE REVOLUTION'S SECOND PHASE.

2. MOST OF THE RUMORS OF COUP PLOTTING AND PALACE INTRIGUE CENTERED AROUND GENERAL FERNANDEZ MALDONADO AND WHETHER HE WOULD BECOME PRIME MINISTER. THAT ISSUE WAS FINALLY SETTLED JANUARY 31 WHEN FERNANDEZ MALDONADO WAS SWORN IN, ALTHOUGH SOME RUMORS HAD HIM INVOLVED IN POSSIBLE PLOTTING FOR A FEBRUARY 5 COUP.

3. SOME RUMORS ON POSSIBLE REPEAT OF 1975 CIVIL GUARD POLICE STRIKE AND CIVIL DUSTURBANCES RELATED TO FACT THAT POLICE DIS-
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CONTENT STILLEXISTS. PROMISED POLICE MINISTRY HAS NOT MATERI-
ALIZED. A RECENT REORGANIZATION IN INTERIOR MINISTRY UPGRADED

STATUS OF POLICE BUT LEFT NO DOUBT THAT THE SEVERAL POLICE FORCES ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE INTERIOR MINISTRY. POLICE WAGES REMAIN LOW. FEBRUARY 5 ANNIVERSARY OF ARMY-GUARDIA CIVIL CLASH WHICH, ACCORDING TO MANH POLICEMEN, RESULTED IN DEATHS AMONG GUARDIA CIVIL (NOVER CONFIRMED) COULD HAVE BEEN OCCASION FOR PROTEST STRIKE OR DEMONSTRATIONS. BUT GOP FIRMLY WARNED POLICE AGAINST SUCH A PROTEST AT SAME TIME DEMONSTRATING SUPPORT FOR POLICE. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVEAL RECENT EXECUTIONS OF INDIVIDUALS DECLARED GUILTY (IN SPEEDY TRIALS) OF MURDER OF POLICEMEN.

4. ALSO, LEFTIST PRESS AND RUMOR MILL SPECULATED THAT APRA MIGHT FOMENT VIOLENCE ON FEBRUARY 5 (LEFTIST PRESS CONTINUES TO ASSERT APARA AND POSSIBLY CIA INVOLVEMENT IN LAST YEAR'S RIOTS). BUT APRA HAD NO LOGICAL REASON TO DISTURB ORDER. THE PARTY HAD BEEN PLANNING FOR ANNUAL FEBRUARY 20 RALLY TO CELEBRATE HAYA DE LA TORRE'S BIRTHDAY AND DEMONSTRATE APRA'S CONTINUED MASS APPEAL. APRA FEARED THAT DISTURBANCES COULD RESLT IN SUSPEN- SION OF GUARANTEES AND FORCED CANCELLATION OF THE RALLY, AS HAPPENED IN 1975. PARTY LEADEERS MET WITH INTERIOR MINISTER CISNEROS PRIOR TO FEBRUARY 5 AND ASSURED HIM THAT PARTY WAS NOT INVOLVED IN 1975 RIOTS AND WOULD NOT AGITATE IN 1976. APRA EXPRESSED TO CISNEROS THE FEAR THAT THE LEFT MIGHT CREATE DISTURBANCES IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT CANCELLATION OF APRA RALLY.

5. POSSIBILITY OF WIDESPREAD LABOR TROUBLE AND STRIKES RE- MAINS ALTHOUGH LIKELIHOOD IS SOMEWHAT LESSEned OR POSTPONED BY THE GOVERNMENT'S RECENT RETREAT ON THE WAGE CEILING. THE LABOR UNIFYING COUNCIL, SPEARHEADED BY THE COMMUNIST-LED CGTP, IS STILL PALNNING A MAJOR RALLY FEBRUARY 25 IN LIMA. THIS RALLY COULD LEAD TO HARDENING OF LABOR STANCE VIS-A-VIS GOVERNMENT, BUT IMPETUS FOR RALLY AND TURN-OUT COULD BE DIMINISHED BY WAGES ACCOMMODATION AND WITHDRAWAL FROM RALLY OF GOP-ORIENTED CTRP.

6. IN SUM, PERU'S BASIC ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS REMAIN AS ACUTE NOW AS THEY HAVE BEEN FOR THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS. BUT WITH THE PASSNG OF IMPORTANT DATES AND GOP DECISIONS IN LABOR AREA, RUMORS OF AN IMMINENT COUP OR OUTBREAK OF POPULAR UNREST HAVE DIMINISHED.

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